MIRACLES.

'Twas winter in all the world,
The meadows in miniver,
When I leaned my ear to a south hillside
And heard the rootlets stir;
All Earth was thrilling and murmuring
Like the shell-song of the Sea,
And I heard the breathing and whispering
Of things beginning to be.
And the million voices of the grass
Saying: "We, too, shall be coming to pass."

Softly I stole to the elm-tree's bole,
Lo, the sap was shouting within,
And the tree a-tremble from root to soul
Of each tip with the coming green;
And listening low to the garden bed,
Up through the stiffened mold
The bulbs were dreaming aloud in red
And purple and cloth of gold;
With the soft little snow drop's maiden dress
Weaving itself out of earthliness.

Then down I knelt by a frost-bound stream,
As still as a dead bird's wings,
And the water was laughing under the ice
A million musical things,
Mad Midsummer murmurings!
And when in the graveyard a face ice-set
I sought, where dead faces be,
Lo, under the sod and the icy wet
The lips were smiling in violet
And the eyes in anemone,
Where the mortal dust was visibly
Putting on immortality.

Last, I came to a frozen face,
Where the city-cold faces are,
The ice of its eye, as I shivered by,
Thawed into a sudden tear,
And the chill mask quivered beneath that heat
Till the cold lips broke apart;
Then soft thought I: "Spring even here,
At work in the frozen heart!"
—Grace Ellery Channing, in Youth's Companion.

BORN TO SERVE

By Charles M. Sheldon,

Author of "IN HIS STEPS," "JOHN KING'S QUESTION CLASS," "EDWARD BLAKE," Etc.

CHAPTER I.—CONTINUED.

"But even from a money point of view, mother, such a position as this is not to be despised. If my services are satisfactory, I can get $4.75 or even five dollars a week, and my board and lodging and washing and other incidentals thrown in. Suppose I had a position as a stenographer in one of the offices downtown. I could not possibly command over $30 a month. Out of that take my board, lodging, washing, clothes, etc. And I could not possibly save out of it over ten dollars a month. Whereas, working out at service, I could save twice that much in actual wages. If I go into Bondman's store, for instance, as a sales-clerk, I cannot get over five dollars a week, out of which I must board, lodge and dress myself. Mother, I have thought it all out, and I feel that I must go in answer to this advertisement. I don't mind the social stigma. I do mind the bitterness of living in idleness at home. Let me do something useful if it is only for a little while. I am sure a servant can be useful."

"It is a dreadful thought to me, Barbara," said Mrs. Clark with a sigh. "I never dreamed that a child of mine would ever be a 'hired girl!'"

"Say 'servant,' mother. 'Servant' is a noble word. Christ was a servant. Don't you remember Dr. Law's sermon on that word last Sunday?"

The girl spoke lightly, not knowing herself the depth of the truth she stated, and yet her mother started and shrunk back almost as if the words were sacrilege. It is possible, however, that the older woman caught some glimpse of that great Light in the social life of men; for, when she spoke again, it was with a yielding to Barbara's wish that was new to her.

"I don't understand you, Barbara. If only the money that your father saved for your education had been more wisely invested, we might—but it is too late to think of that now. It is the thought that you are throwing away your preparation for life on something beneath you that makes me oppose this. But if you do go from this other motive, that changes matters somewhat."

"Of course it does, mother! Let me go. I should not be happy to go without your consent. I will do this: I will go for a trial. This is probably the only way I can go, anyhow. But, if after a reasonable time I find it is impossible for me to continue, if even my dream of any possible service to society turns out to be ridiculous or foolish, I will come back and—and—be a burden to you again, mother, until I find out what I am good for in this world."

"It is only on some such condition that I am at all willing to have you take this step, Barbara," said her mother, reluctantly, as Barbara rose and stood up by her for a moment in silence. She suddenly stooped and kissed her mother, and then walked over to the window and looked at her watch.

"After six. I might as well go right over there now."

"They will ask you for references," the mother spoke up, nervously, already doubting the wisdom of the whole affair.

Barbara resolutely gathered up her courage.

"I have Prof. White's letter—the Chautauqua summer, mother, I can take those." Barbara referred to a summer's experience when in company with several seniors from the college she had served as a head waiter and housekeeper at a large hotel in a state Chautauqua assembly.

"They are good as far as they go."

"Yes, mother, and I am sure they will go far enough in this case. This family—" Barbara picked up the paper and read the advertisement again to get the street number correctly—"is in crying need of help. They will not drive me away without a trial, references or no references."

Mrs. Clark did not reply, but looked and felt very anxious.

It was a serious step in her daughter's life and under any circumstances it might have a most serious effect on her future.

"This will leave me alone here, Barbara," she said as Barbara put on her hat.

"I think I can arrange to come home evenings," said Barbara, thoughtfully. "We will settle it all right somehow, mother," she added with a cheerful courage she did not altogether possess. For since her mother's consent she had begun to realize a little more deeply what she was about to do.

"I hope so, dear," was the mother's answer, and then quite naturally she began to cry silently.

Barbara went up to her at once, and said: "Dear mother, believe it is all going to be for the best. I must be a breadwinner. Give me your blessing as if I were a knight of the olden time going out to fight a dragon."

"Bless you, dear girl," said Mrs. Clark, smiling through her tears, and Barbara kissed her silently, and then quickly walked out of the room as if afraid of changing her resolution.

Barbara Clark was not an extraordinary girl in the least. She was a girl with a quick, bright mind, positive in her convictions, with impulses that were generous and sympathetic, with very little self-esteem, affectionate towards her friends and ambitious to do and be something. It seemed very strange to her that out of all her class in college she was one of half a dozen who had not been able to secure a position even of a secondary character in any school. Her father's death had left her and her mother alone in the world except for a few distant relatives in the west. Influences that might have secured a place for her were not used owing to a compulsory change of residence to another city caused by Mr. Clark's business failures. The intimate circle of close friends that had surrounded the Clarks during prosperity was changed for the cold wideness of a strange city lacking in personal friendliness. And Barbara and her mother had passed several weeks in Crawford, practically unknown, and with the growing consciousness that the little legacy and the insurance money were being drained seriously without hope of replenishing from any source so far as Barbara was concerned.

The girl's longing to be a breadwinner had driven her into many difficult places. Under some conditions she would have gone at once into one of the great mercantile houses of Crawford as one of its great army of saleswomen. But at that time of the year every position was filled, except a few places that did not offer anything but starvation wages under conditions that Mrs. Clark positively would not allow Barbara to accept so long as there was the slightest hope of the girl finding an opportunity to teach. So for several weeks Barbara had been, as she said, not unkindly, eating her bread at home in bitterness, because no one seemed to need her in the great world, where the struggle for existence seemed to her to be a struggle that made any other existence more and more impossible.

It was therefore not without a positive feeling of relief that Barbara Clark now hurried on to No. 36 Hamilton street to secure the position of "hired girl" in a family of five, entire strangers to her; and she smiled a little to herself at the thought of her

"I HAVE COME IN ANSWER TO YOUR ADVERTISEMENT."

anxiety lest a number of other girls should have been before her and secured the place.

"I am in a hurry to look into the jaws of my dragon," she said, as she turned the corner into Hamilton street. "I do hope he will not swallow me down at one mouthful before I have had a blow at him with my—my—broomstick," she added, not caring whether the metaphor were exact or not.

She paused a moment when she reached No. 36, and was pleased to note that the house was not too large nor too small.

"Just an average family, I hope. Well, here goes," she said, under her breath, as she rang the bell. She had studied Latin and Greek at Mount Holyoke, but "Here goes" was all she could think of to express her courage at that moment. After all, "Here goes" may be as good a battle cry as any other to alarm a dragon, especially if back of the short cry is a silent prayer for strength, such as Barbara offered up at that moment.

There was no immediate answer to her ring and she rang again. Then there was the patter of a child's step in the hall and the door was opened.

"Is your mamma at home?" Barbara asked with a smile. The child did not answer at once, and Barbara took the liberty of stepping into the hall, still smiling at the child, who continued to look at her gravely. If dragons are to be met, why not with a smile?

"Will you please tell your mamma I would like to see her? Tell her I have come to see if she wants a—"

"A hired girl?" asked Carl suddenly, for it was he.

"Yes," continued Barbara, smiling; "tell her a hired girl wants to see her."

"All right," said Carl, slowly. He left Barbara standing awkwardly in the hall and started upstairs to call his mother. Near the top he met her coming down.

"Another one of those girls," began Carl, in a good, sturdy voice; but his mother said: "Hush," and in a tired manner ordered him to go back upstairs and stay with Lewis until she came up.

She came down and met Barbara in the hall. There were two chairs there, and Mrs. Ward sat down, saying: "Won't you take a seat?" looking at Barbara closely as she did so.

"Thank you," said Barbara, quietly. "I have come in answer to your advertisement in the evening news."

"Yes," said Mrs. Ward, slowly. "Are you—do you think you can do our work?"

"I think so," replied Barbara, modestly.

"Can you take charge and go on without being told how to do every little thing?" Mrs. Ward asked somewhat sharply. She was silently, but rapidly, noting everything about Barbara's face and dress and manner.

"Yes, ma'am, I think I can, after learning your ways."

"Your name?"

"Barbara Clark. I live with my mother on Randolph street, two blocks from here."

"You have worked out before?" Mrs. Ward was beginning to note the quiet refinement of the girl, and her first thought was a suspicion of Barbara.

"No, I have never worked out as a servant in a private family. I have been a waiter and cook and housekeeper one summer season at Lake View Chautauqua. The only references I have are from Prof. White, who had charge of the assembly that year."

"Prof. Carrol Burns White?"

"Yes, ma'am. Of Waldeau academy."

"He was my son Alfred's teacher there. His reference would be enough." Mrs. Ward spoke eagerly, looking at Barbara even more keenly. "But you are not a—a servant girl?"

"I am, if you decide to take me," replied Barbara, calmly.

Mrs. Ward looked at the girl thoughtfully. "I do not think—we—you are not of the class of servants I am used to. May I ask, is it—may I ask how you came to be seeking this work?"

"Certainly," replied Barbara, cheerfully. "I have tried to secure other places, and have failed. I think I can suit you as a servant. I—"

Barbara hesitated. She thought if she tried to say anything about her studies in social economics, or the adventure of this plan, as she had only vaguely dreamed it herself, she might not be understood. Better wait and let that develop naturally. So she stopped suddenly and sat looking at Mrs. Ward quietly.

Mrs. Ward hesitated also. It was an unusual situation. The girl had given enough evidence of being all right, especially if Prof. White's recommendation was a good one. At the same time, there was a great risk in hiring a person of Barbara's evident education and refinement. How far would she want to become one of the family? What relations would have to be established between her and the mistress?

But Mrs. Ward was thoroughly tired out with a succession of disappointments in experiences with girls who were incompetent, ungrateful and dishonest. The suggestion to her mind of a good, honest, capable woman in kitchen and house who could relieve her of the pain of daily drudgery was a suggestion of such relief that she knew it came to her that her decision was almost made up to take Barbara even if the circumstances in the girl's life were strange and unusual. Barbara suddenly helped her to make the decision final.

"Of course, I am ready to be taken on trial. At the end of a week or a month, if you are not satisfied, I shall expect you to say so, and that will end it."

"How much do you expect a week?" Mrs. Ward asked, slowly.

Barbara colored. She had never been asked the question before.

"I don't know. Perhaps you cannot tell until you find out how much I am worth to you."

"Shall we say four dollars to begin with? We have paid more than that—but—"

"I will begin on that," replied Barbara, quietly. "Now, of course, if I come, you will let me know exactly what my duties are, so that there may be no mistakes on my part."

Barbara had a good deal of shrewd business sense inherited from her father.

"Of course," replied Mrs. Ward, almost sharply.

"About my staying in the house—" began Barbara. "I would much prefer to go home at night, to be with my mother."

"I don't think that can be managed." Mrs. Ward spoke with some irritation. "I shall need you in the evening very often."

"We can arrange that after I come." Barbara spoke gently again. "That is, if I am to come."

"Yes—yes"—Mrs. Ward looked at Barbara very sharply—"yes, you can come on trial; I am glad to get anyone."

Barbara colored again, and the other woman saw it.

"Of course, I did not mean—I mean I am just about discouraged over my housekeeping, and I am nearly down sick over it."

"I am very sorry," replied Barbara, gravely. Mrs. Ward looked at her doubtfully. It was one woman's sympathy for another spoken in four short words, but the older woman had had her faith in servants so rudely broken so many times that she could not at once accept the sympathy as real. She kept coldly silent as Barbara rose.

"Shall I come in the morning?" she asked.

"Yes, say nine o'clock."

"I will bring Prof. White's letters then."

"Mamma," cried Carl, at that moment appearing at the head of the stairs, "Lewis wants to know if that hired girl is going to—"

There was a muffled cry from the bedroom upstairs as Carl suddenly disappeared, dragged back into the room by the older brother. Barbara smiled, and said "Good night," and went out, saying to herself as she went down the steps: "After all, the dragon was not so bad as I feared. I feel rather sorry for the dragon keeper. Mrs. Ward herself," on whose character and probable behavior, together with that of her family, Barbara gravely dwelt as she walked home.

She grew quite animated as she told her mother the story of her adventures so far. The matter of staying with her mother evenings was a subject of earnest discussion. Both agreed that it must be managed if possible. Barbara went over the interview and gave her mother the best possible picture of Mrs. Ward.

"I am sure we shall get on very well. She is a tired-out woman, irritable because of her nerves. But I am sure she is a good woman when she is well," Barbara concluded, innocently. "The children will bother me, I have no doubt. But I know I can get on. I saw only one child. He has a roguish face, but not bad at all. Oh, the dragon is not what he's painted, mother."

"Not yet," said Mrs. Clark, in prophecy.

"No, not yet," answered Barbara, cheerfully. She felt almost lighthearted to think she had a position, even if it was only that of a servant.

[To Be Continued.]

MUST HAVE BEEN NATURAL.

The Humorous Compliment of Bishop Wilmer to an Atrocious Piano Player.

One of the most kind-hearted men in the world was the late Bishop Joseph P. Wilmer, of Louisiana, says a southern exchange. He could not hurt the feelings of the humblest mortal. He was once traveling in England with his cousin, Bishop Richard Wilmer, when an incident occurred which shows Bishop Joseph's readiness in a trying situation. The two bishops were being entertained by a gentleman who thought his wife had all the musical talent and accomplishment that any human being can possess. He insisted upon a specimen of her performance. The two apostolic cousins stood near the piano. Bishop Richard, recognizing that a compliment would be necessary and difficult to make, quietly stepped back, as most men do on such occasions, leaving the position of honor to Bishop Joseph, wondering what the end would be after "the assault upon the ivory keys" might suddenly terminate in an awkward selah. Bishop Joseph, like a self-possessed woman, with dignity and sweetness of thought, spoke to the hungry soul of the adoring husband:

"Is that touch of your wife natural or acquired?"

"Oh, it is perfectly natural," replied the delighted spouse.

"I thought it was," said the bishop, "for I don't think such a touch could be acquired."

A Faithful Bird Mate.

When the British steamship Saxoline arrived at Wilmington, Del., recently, the sailors showed to the government officials, with a great deal of pride, a cage in which were confined two white birds. It appears that when the vessel, which sailed last from Cette, France, was in mid-ocean, a white heron flew against the rigging with such force as to break its wing, and causing it to fall to the deck. One of the crew immediately took the helpless bird, dressed its injuries and placed it in a cage which happened to be on board. With the heron at the time of the accident was its mate, and when the injured bird was placed in the cage, the other hovered about and would not leave the ship. For several days it remained, and then the sailors finally opened the cage. The uninjured bird immediately joined its wounded mate and the two remained perfectly contented in their confined quarters. The touching incident made great pets of the two birds, and from captain down to cook the men on board the ship looked after the comfort of the herons and during the vessel's stay at Wilmington took delight in escorting visitors to the cage.—Golden Days.

Two Views.

Different sermons may be preached from the same text, and there may be more or less of truth in each of them.

"Here is an account," said Mr. Morse, pointing to a paragraph in the evening paper, "of the way in which a boy was saved from drowning by a mastiff which belonged to his cousin. The boy ventured too near the edge of a treacherous bank, lost his footing and fell into the lake. The dog dashed in after him and succeeded in pulling him out."

"There," said Mrs. Morse, turning an accusing glance upon her ten-year-old son, "that shows how dangerous it is for a boy to go too near the water!"

"Why, mother," said the boy, in sorrowful astonishment, "I thought father read it because it showed how perfectly safe I'd be wherever I went, if you'd only let him buy me a big dog!"

Mr. Morse coughed, and became discreetly absorbed in the quotations of mining stocks.—Youth's Companion.

Had a Better Story.

"Did you see the account of that flash of lightning that burned the hair from a boy's head without otherwise hurting him?"

"I did," answered the cheerful liar, "and I was pained to note the incompleteness of the story. Now, I happen to know of a case that is really remarkable. The lightning entered a barber's shop and not only undertook the task of singeing a man's hair, but it rung up the proper amount on the cash register."—Chicago Post.

A Fatal Mistake.

Mrs. Isolate (of Lonelyville)—You say the new cook only stopped long enough at the Lonelyville railroad station to take the next train back to the city, Ferdinand? I fear you didn't show her enough little attentions on the trip out!

Isolate (miserably)—I bought her everything the train boy had; but I knew I had lost her when I didn't kiss her when the train went through the tunnel!—Brooklyn Eagle.

Too Effective.

"John," said Mrs. Billus, after the caller had gone away, "I wish you wouldn't bunch your blunders so."

"What do you mean, Maria?" asked Mr. Billus.

"I didn't mind your telling her that you were ten years older than I, but you followed it up a minute later by letting it slip out that you were 52."—Chicago Tribune.

It Would Seem So.

Some men work all night long,
And some from sun to sun;
But the bill collector has a snap—
His work is always dun.
—Chicago Daily News.

COMPARISON.

"Miss May, I do not know any better way to describe my embarrassment in your presence than to say that I feel as if I were about to be examined at school."—Bombe.

The Cynic's Misfortune.

This world's a place, when all is done,
By fond illusions ruled;
That man cannot have any fun
Who never can be fooled.
—Washington Star.

A Sure Indication.

"Oh, I visited such a woefully poverty-stricken family this morning," said the sympathetic member of the charity committee.

"Indeed!" asked the chairman of the committee. "Were they very, very poor?"

"Poor! Man, it is pitiable. Why, they are so poor that they keep 15 dogs."—Baltimore American.

Accounting for It Chemically.

"It may be merely fancy," remarked Mrs. Selldom-Holme, "but since my husband began drinking the water from that iron spring he has seemed to be ten times as obstinate as he used to be."

"Perhaps," suggested Mrs. Nexdore, "the water is tinctured with pig iron."—Chicago Tribune.

His Busy Day.

Quarryman—Biddy!

His Wife—Phwat do ye want now, sure?

Quarryman—Pour some kerosene on th' fire an' make it hot so Oi can thawout me dynamite.—N. Y. Weekly.

The Better Part.

The bachelors say that, on the whole,
Their independent homes will do;
But married men have better halves
And therefore better quarters, too.
—Good Housekeeping.

THOSE EQUINE HATS.

Uncle Hickorycrick—Whoa, thar, Betsy! Dang it! Whar ye gwine?

Betsy—There's a furniture van ahead with a mirror in the rear end. I want to see if my hat's on straight.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Very Exciting.

He—That must be a very interesting book you are reading.

She—Oh, it's awfully exciting! The heroine changes her gown six times in the first chapter."—Tit-Bits.

Quite a Difference.

"You announce in your paper," said the wrathful young woman, "that I would not be married, all reports to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Well, isn't that the report you sent in?" asked the society editor.

"No, it isn't," answered the wrathful young woman. "The inference is all wrong. I said I would not be married to the particular young man to whom I was reported engaged, which is quite a different matter."—Chicago Post.

At It Again.

Once more the lonely fisherman
Dusts off his book of flies;
Likewise his reel and pocket flask,
Also his last year's lies.
—Chicago Daily News.

THE LATEST COMPOSITE.

A composite picture of Mrs. Smith's cooks for a year. She had a run of poor luck, including a Chinaman, a negro and several rather strong-minded and buxom females.—Good Housekeeping.

Odd.

"Any odd job?" the tramp inquired.
The housewife answered with a nod.
"Were you to do most any job,"
She pleasantly observed, "'twere odd!"
—Detroit Free Press.

Probably Never Heard of It.

The theological argument waxed warmer and warmer.

"But, my dear sir," protested Deacon Ironside, aghast, "you don't pretend to know more about it than the Apostle Peter did, do you?"

"What did the Apostle Peter know," retorted the man with the aggressive pompadour, "about the higher criticism?"—Chicago Tribune.

A Mystery Solved.

Bessie and her father were sitting out on the lawn looking at the stars.

"That very red one," said her father, "is Mars, named after the god of war."

"The god of war!" cried Bessie. "Oh, papa, I wonder if that isn't where the shooting stars come from?"—Detroit Free Press.

He Is Still Looking.

"Here's a good chance for you, Jack," said the father of the young man just about to graduate from college, looking up from the "want" advertisement in the paper.

"A chance isn't what I want," said the young man, loftily. "I'm looking for an opportunity."—Somerville Journal.

Satisfactorily Explained.

"Why do you talk so much?" ma cried,
Reproving little May.
"I s'pose it's 'cause," the child replied,
"I'se got so much to say."
—Catholic Standard and Times.

FATHERLY ADVICE.

"Wot's de matter, Billy?"

"Me intented trew me over becuz I didn't have no automobile."

"Take an old man's advice, an' don't have nothin' more to do wid her. A woman wid extravigant ideas like dat would ruin any man."—Detroit Free Press.

Mental Activity.

The man whose mind is ne'er content
On one of two extremes is bent.
He pushes on to fame's front rank
Or else he gets to be a crank.
—Washington Star.

One Way of Telling.

Curley—See that fellow looking over there? He used to go to the same college that I did. I wonder if he remembers me?

Burleigh—Ask him for the loan of five dollars.

Curley—What for?

Burleigh—If he remembers you, you won't get it.—Judge.

Making Progress.

Miss Young (enthusiastically)—Oh, Miss Timer is so lovely, so intellectual! Not in her first youth, you know, but—

Miss Stager—No; but from what I have learned about her, I should think she must be well on in her second childhood.—Leslie's Weekly.

A Practical Guess.

"What makes that friend of yours keep clamoring for the young man in politics?"

"I don't know," answered Senator Sorghum, "unless he thinks that some of the older fellows are getting too wary and hard to handle."—Washington Star.